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THE ADVENTURES OF A FLOCK OF WILD GEESE

By E. D. NAUMAN

Several decades ago David Sears and his son Harry owned and occupied a farm near the northwest corner of Keokuk County, Iowa. This is an ordinary rolling prairie farm. The only unusual feature about it is a natural spring of water that never goes dry and never freezes up.

At the time I am writing of, this farm was devoted mainly to the raising of sheep, together with such farm crops as worked in well with that industry. Extensive groves, orchards and vineyards occupied the eastern portion of the farm immediately about the residences and barns. Directly west from in front of the main barn was a sheep-yard 80 feet wide from north to south and about 200 feet in length from east to west. This yard was well inclosed with a wooden paling fence. Both north and south of this yard were trees and bushes in profusion. The barn formed most of the east end of the yard, and to the westward was a field of corn which had been cut for fodder and was standing in rows of tall shocks like sentinels on guard before a field of young and tender winter wheat, just beyond. Where these two fields joined, and to the northward a short distance, is the spring of living waters above referred to. What a paradise for wild geese!

During the fall migration, a flock of eleven majestic Canada Geese found this ideal spot. They remained in the neighborhood during the autumn, and came to this wheat field daily.

David and Harry* were Quakers ("Friends"). Consequently, the most dangerous weapons they possessed were forks, rakes and hoes. Most of the neighbors, being of the same peaceful faith, were likewise possessed of the same kind of "field artillery." So these birds were not persecuted or molested much, and even when the snows of winter began to fly and covered up most of the wheat, they were loath to leave, for there still remained the golden corn and the living waters. But to complicate matters still further, the farmer decided at this time that his sheep needed some fodder besides the grass blades and tassels that were still protruding out of the snow, so he hitched up "Tom and Jerry" to his fodder cart, and like the prudent man that he was, drove to the farthest end of the field and began to load fodder for a day's rations.

This, of course, frightened the geese greatly. They immediately took to the air and disappeared toward the south in great haste. But recollections of the tender young wheat and the golden corn, to say nothing of the living water, must have tantalized them all day, for late in the evening, flying low and on weary wings, they returned to this vicinity and, seeing no one in their quarters, settled down among the fodder shocks as usual. Next day, the sheep being in need of more sustenance, very nearly the same proceedings took place, except that the geese did not remain away quite so late in the evening. Day after day, Harry went after his load of fodder, and each time the geese flew away to return again in due time. The period of their absence, however, became shorter each day as the winter rolled on, until at last they merely flew over into the next field and waited while Harry got his load and departed for the sheep-lot, when they immediately returned, always alighting where the shocks had just been removed, to pick up the scattered corn and evidently to dry and warm their feet.

*The given names of "David" and "Harry" have been used in this narrative because these splendid citizens, being "Friends," wished always to be so addressed, and would have almost regarded the use of "Mr. Sears" as a personal affront.—E. D. N.

But now a new difficulty arose. As time wore on, each day the number of shocks remaining in the field grew less, and each day operations moved back a little closer to the groves and sheep yard. However, this did not seem to deter the geese much, for they were always promptly on hand about the remaining shocks. Finally, when the last shock had been hauled into the yard and scattered over the snow as usual, the gate from the field having been left open, the geese came in and began to eat with the sheep.

The barn at the east end of the yard had one unusually large door, which had been made large enough to accommodate a big load of hay or fodder and came in close proximity to the roof at one point. This door was open. While a "Friend" might and does have conscientious scruples against shooting and killing, Harry knew there could be no harm in adding a few Wild Geese to his collection of poultry, so he hurried slyly back through the grove and orchard while the geese were occupied with their dinner among the sheep. They soon saw him coming through the gate from the field and, having their doubts as to his peaceful intentions, they immediately sought an avenue of escape.

Both the north and south side of the yard being occupied by trees, a wily old gander undertook to lead the way out over the barn. Eight of them made their escape in this way, but the other three, having mistaken their elevation, failed to get over and flew through the open door into the barn. Harry closed the door with alacrity, got his sheep shears and carefully trimmed their wing primaries, then "opened wide the door." While this pruning of wings put an abrupt conclusion to their navigation of the air, it did not interfere in the least with the operation of their "honkers." After an absence of a few hours, the eight geese came back to this vicinity. There being no more corn in the field, and with their fellows in the sheep yard calling continually, they made several evolutions over the premises, then settled in the yard again. The next drive yielded Harry two more geese. The other six got away as before.

These drives were continued for several days, until finally the whole flock was driven into the barn. Hunger and the calling of their fellows in the sheep-yard always brought the remainder of the flock back. But to get the last wily remnant of them into the barn, the expedient of scattering corn close to the barn only had to be used. Having the flock close to the barn with the big door open made it much easier for the geese to go into the barn than to fly over it, and eventually they all got inside.

From that time on, as long as either David or Harry lived, there was always a flock of Wild Geese at their farm. But there had to be a semi-annual trimming of wings, for when their distant cousins came along in spring and fall, flying high in the blue sky, and their "honk" was heard in the distance, the captive flock had visions of the illimitable prairies and marshes of Canada, or the ponds and sloughs of Louisiana and Bird Island. At such times the "call of the wild," implanted through thousands of generations, would have asserted itself, and the Sears' farm would certainly have lost its greatest charm for the nature lover if these precautions had not been taken.

David and Harry have long since gone to their last reward, but these noble birds and their descendents are still present and add greatly to the aesthetic charm of many a farm of the Middle West.

The activities of wild geese have formed a link in the outdoor associations of several generations of Iowa farmers. Another interesting article is 'Combating Wild Geese,' by Ellis E. Wilson, in 'Iowa Bird Life, Vol. II, 1932, pp. 35-36. This article describes the author's experiences with geese during wheat-sowing time in early Iowa.—Ed.

GENERAL NOTES

Hawks in Iowa during the Fall of 1934.—Despite rumors pointing to the great decrease in the numbers of hawks in the Middle West, the flight this fall seemed nearly normal in most respects. The great triangle between the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers might be a concentration area for the moving hawks and thus account for the numbers of the birds, but in any event it will be interesting to note any reports of hawks this past fall from other parts of the country, to see if there is a marked decrease from last year.

Along the Mississippi River during September, the flight of Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks was especially noticeable, and there were days when dozens of birds of both species were seen. The Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks were present in about the usual numbers. Red-tailed Hawks were found to be less common than they are farther west. The first Duck Hawk was seen near the Wapsipinicon River in Scott County, on September 22. A Pigeon Hawk was watched in the same locality, but just across the river in Clinton County, on the same day. This bird seemed to be well fed and playfully knocked an adult Red-headed Woodpecker to the ground and flew off, without harming the woodpecker. This latter bird was more scared than hurt and shook himself and flew to a nearby tree.

Down the Missouri valley the main flight of hawks took place during the first part of October, and the bulk of the birds were Red-tailed Hawks. Some Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen and two Swainson's Hawks were noticed. October 10 was a typical day and on this day some 58 Red-tailed Hawks were seen in Audubon, Shelby, and Harrison Counties. Four birds were distinctly black, and five were seen in the very light plumage; the rest of the birds appeared to be normal Red-tailed Hawks.

The Sparrow Hawks were common over the entire state during the earlier part of the fall. The first Bald Eagle seen was an adult bird flying over Marble Lake, Dickinson County, on August 30. The Osprey was first seen on August 28, near Elm Lake, Wright County. Another Osprey was seen in Harrison County near the Missouri River on September 27. Marsh Hawks were found about as common as ever and in all corners of the state. A record of the Turkey Vulture, on October 13 in Ida County, is given, as the bird is not often found in that vicinity.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

Migration Notes during the Fall of 1934.—The following records are scattered over the state. An Arkansas Kingbird was seen at Montezuma, in Poweshiek County, on August 10. Two Red Crossbills were seen near Norwalk, in Warren County, on August 15. A flock of about 40 Brewer's Blackbirds was found near Solon, Johnson County, on August 13. Another flock of the same species was found mixed with Bronzed Grackles on October 7, near Wanello, Louisa County. A third flock of these blackbirds was seen on October 10, in Adair County.

The last Whip-poor-will of the season was found in Scott County on September 21. A flock of about 300 White Pelicans was seen on September 26, near Clarinda in Page County. On October 7, a list of 61 species of birds was recorded in the Muscatine Slough region in Louisa County. The most interesting find was the presence of 10 Black Ducks on Klum Lake.

Four Golden Plovers were seen on October 22, near Archer in O'Brien County. An adult Golden Eagle was seen the same day near Hartley in the same county. The first Landl Longspurs of the season were listed in Sac County, when about 500 were seen near the town of Schaller on October 27.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

An Autumnal Flight of Broad-winged Hawks in Eastern Iowa.—On September 23, 1934, Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Batton of Des Moines and the writer witnessed a migratory flight of the Broad-winged Hawk while we were along the Iowa River, four miles north of Columbus Junction, Louisa County. The flock was estimated to contain approximately 400 individuals.

The behavior of these birds was of considerable interest to the writer. The flock looked like a long, slightly weaving streamer, with the birds gliding along on set wings, two or three abreast and in close formation, one behind the other. This was considerably different from the scattered, circling individual Red-tailed Hawks which composed a migratory flock of 72 birds seen a year ago, and which was nearly a half hour in passing.—PHILIP A. DU MONT, Des Moines, Iowa.

Additional Starling Records in Iowa.—On November 3, 1934, a flock of from 200 to 300 Starlings was seen near the west city limits of the town of Denison in Crawford County. While this was not the first record for this county, it was the largest flock of Starlings seen by the writer in western Iowa during 1934. Five Starlings were seen near Logan, Harrison County, on November 5, 1934. On November 27, while driving through the town of Hartley, O'Brien County, I saw two Starlings flying near the highway in the east part of that town. These records bring the county reports of Starlings in Iowa to 96, with the unreported counties being Buena Vista, Lyon and Osceola.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

Ducks on the Mississippi River near Fort Madison, Iowa.—During the first few days of November, 1934, the writer spent considerable time along the Mississippi River between Fort Madison and Montrose in Lee County. It was along this stretch of river, known on the maps as Cooper Lake, that the great raft of Scaup Ducks was watched daily, with an effort being made to estimate how many were actually resting and feeding in this area. These ducks remained for the most part out in the middle of the lake, where they spent their time diving for food and resting in complete safety from duck hunters. The lower end of the raft started just above the line where the Montrose-Nauvoo ferry boat crossed the river. It extended in an almost unbroken mass north for about five miles. The writer tried blocking off masses of the birds by using some object on the Illinois shore as a point to work from, and in this way a rough estimate could be made. A conservative number would place the numbers of ducks in this flock at more than 200,000 birds. Below Montrose there were probably not more than 1000 ducks, so apparently the main food supply for these birds was at the point where they were congregated. No ducks were taken, so it could not be determined whether any of the birds were Greater Scaups. We were, however, able to pick out an occasional Ring-necked Duck.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

Recent Magpie Records in Iowa.—Three Magpies were seen on October 30, 1934, near College Springs, Page County. This location is just a short distance from the Missouri state line. Magpies were also reported from Plymouth County on several occasions during the fall of 1934 by Walter W. Trusell of Sioux City. In November, 1934, R. K. Harker shot a Magpie in Emmet County, east of Estherville (reported by Dr. F. L. R. Roberts). Myrle L. Jones observed a Magpie near Clare in Pocahontas County on January 6, 1935. It is always of interest to watch for another wave of visiting Magpies, such as the one reported by Dr. T. C. Stephens during 1921.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

Fall Bird Notes from Clay County.—A male Yellow-headed Blackbird was noted in a mixed flock of "blackbirds" seen near Round Lake, Clay County, on October 4, 1934. While there are later dates for this bird in Minnesota, few fall dates could be found for Iowa.

Six Horned Grebes were seen on Lost Island Lake, Clay County, October 4, 1934. Swimming near by, offering a splendid chance for comparison, were two Eared Grebes. The throat of the latter species was grayer than in the Horned Grebe, and the white on the cheek did not extend as high behind the eye.—PHILIP A. DU MONT, Des Moines, Iowa.

A Pokeberry Banquet.—While working between Odessa Lake and Levee No. 15, in Louisa County, Iowa, I came across a large acreage of pokeberry plants. The plants were growing on ground which had been burnt over in the last few years. The area covered by these plants must have been at least five acres. The date was November 16, 1934, and to birds, the berries are apparently most edible at this time of the fall. Dozens of Robins flew up out of the patch. Fox Sparrows had concentrated in this spot in larger numbers than I had ever before seen; there must have been at least 500 of the birds. Slate-colored Juncos and Tree Sparrows were flying in all directions. Cardinals and Song Sparrows were also common. A dozen or so each of Flickers and Red-headed Woodpeckers flew up from the pokeberry plants on my approach. A lone Carolina Wren dived off to one side. Another resident, probably not interested in pokeberries at that time, was a Pileated Woodpecker. He was making enough noise to vie with a passing flock of Crows, and with this noisy bird still calling, I left the banquet table to the guests.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

Birds Observed in Northwest Iowa.—The following birds were observed on November 27 and 28, 1934. The first Snow Bunting of the season was seen near Archer, O'Brien County, on the 27th. Six Short-eared Owls were flushed near Dolliver, Emmet County, and others were seen in O'Brien, Osceola, Lyon and Plymouth Counties. A total of 15 Rough-legged Hawks were noticed on the trip. Three Red-tailed Hawks and one forlorn Sparrow Hawk were also entered in the note-book. Thousands of Lapland Longspurs were scattered about northwest Iowa, and with them were hundreds of Horned Larks. Other non-game birds listed were Cardinals, Slate-colored Juncos, Tree Sparrows, Chickadees, Blue Jays, Flickers, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Bronzed Grackles and Starlings. In Emmet County the Hungarian Partridge was found to be nearly as common as the Ring-necked Pheasant. Two Prairie Chickens were seen in Emmet County, while in Osceola and Lyon Counties several small flocks were watched. Mallard Ducks were also flushed from cornfields on several occasions.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

Starlings in Monona County, Iowa.—Early in November, 1934, Supt. J. H. McBurney, of the Onawa Public Schools, brought a live bird to me for identification. It was a Starling. He said that the bird had been brought to school by Gerald Barsby, who lives on a farm northwest of Onawa. The bird was one out of a flock of 12. These birds were not to be seen around the farm during the daytime, but flew off early in the morning in the direction of Blue Lake. At about sundown they returned to roost in the barn. The Starlings were occasionally seen to fight with the pigeons, but not with the English Sparrows. The specimen taken to the school was mounted and is now in the Biology Laboratory of the High School at Onawa.—T. C. STEPHENS, Sioux City, Iowa.

The American and Red-breasted Mergansers Wintering in Iowa.—While most of the Mississippi River was frozen over during January, 1935, there was a fair sized stretch of open water near Bellevue. Construction of the Bellevue navigation lock resulted in continuous pumping at the lock site with the resulting open water below the town of Bellevue. It was here, on January 11, 1935, that we found more than 50 American Mergansers and 8 Red-breasted Mergansers. The first species seemed to enjoy drifting downstream a short distance, after which they would suddenly jump from the water and fly upstream near the lock. The latter species were not prone to follow out these actions and were apparently quite satisfied to swim upstream, feeding as they went.—WM. YOUNG WORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

Publications on Iowa Ornithology during 1934.—(Not including those in 'Iowa Bird Life.')

Baumgartner, Frederick M. Bird Mortality on the Highways; Auk, LI, pp. 537-538.

Bennett, Logan J. Notes on Nesting Waterfowl and Other Marsh Nesting Birds in Northwest Iowa; Oologist, LI, pp. 101-104.

'Bird-Lore.' Christmas bird censuses from Iowa, XXXVI, pp. 16, 50-51.

DuMont, Philip A. The Double-crested Cormorant Nesting in South-eastern Iowa; Auk, LI, pp. 509-510. A Report on the Starling in Iowa; Auk, LI, pp. 525-526. The Breeding Birds of Iowa; Oologist, LI, pp. 50-66. Migrant Nelson's Sparrows in Central Iowa; Wils. Bull., XLVI, p. 62. The Western Harlequin Duck in Central Iowa; Wils. Bull., XLVI, pp. 63-64. Shufeldt's Junco Taken in Northwestern Iowa; Wils. Bull., XLVI, pp. 200-201. Iowa Specimen of the "American" Eider Re-determined as the Pacific Eider; Wils. Bull., XLVI, p. 203. Observations of the Ferruginous Rough-leg in Iowa; Wils. Bull., XLVI, p. 262.

Eaton, Richard Jefferson. The Migratory Movements of Certain Colonies of Herring Gulls in Eastern North America; Bird-Banding, V, (Iowa records, pp. 5, 8, 76).

Errington, Paul L. Second Broods in the Mallard Duck; Auk, LI, pp. 78-80. A Late Iowa Record for an American Bittern; Wils. Bull., XLVI, pp. 62-63.

Gessell, Jean P. Ruby-throated Hummingbird; Bird-Lore, XXXVI, pp. 291-293.

Hendrickson, George O. Birds Found Dead on Iowa Primary Roads; Proc. Ia. Acad. Sci., XXXIX, 1932, pp. 251-252 (issued in 1934).

Holland, Harold M. Cardinals Again Nest in a Sparrow Trap; Bird-Lore, XXXVI, p. 305.

Mueller, Charles F. Carolina Wren at Davenport, Iowa; Bird-Lore, XXXVI, p. 108. Egrets and Other Birds at Davenport, Iowa; *ibid.*, p. 299.

Pierce, Fred J. Notes from Buchanan County, Iowa; Auk, LI pp. 253-254.

Youngworth, William. The Starling at Sioux City, Iowa; Wils. Bull., XLVI, p. 62. Field Notes from the Sioux City, Iowa, Region; *ibid.*, p. 62. An Early Morning Mixed Migration; *ibid.*, p. 127. The Western Blue Grosbeak in Iowa; *ibid.*, p. 257. Changes in the Habits of the Prairie Chicken; *ibid.*, pp. 262-263.

(The 'Fish and Game Guide', a bi-monthly leaflet beginning with Vol. I, No. 1 in July, 1934, is published by the Iowa State Fish and Game Commission. It contains many references to Iowa game birds, of interest chiefly to sportsmen and those concerned with game management matters. Free copies may be had upon request to the Commission, Des Moines.)—F. J. P.

The Rôle of the Accidental or Straggling Species of Birds in Iowa.—The accidental occurrence of any bird within the confines of the state is perhaps not of great consequence unless repeated a sufficient number of times. If, however, such a species is noted a dozen or fifteen times in as many years, the species might well be considered an integral part of our local avifauna.

In many states it is now the practice to enter no species of bird on the state list except when represented by a specimen. If that practice were followed in Iowa, no less than 30 species would be removed from our list, including such birds as Mockingbird, Lewis's Woodpecker, Red-shafted Flicker, Little Blue Heron, Lark Bunting, etc. Many of these 30 or more birds were included in the Iowa list on the basis of formerly existing specimens.

One difficulty in Iowa, which probably has been experienced in other states, has been the **preservation** of the first, or even the second and third, specimen of a rare straggler once it has been secured. Without this specimen there is always a possibility that the species or sub-species was incorrectly determined.

The writer has advocated for some time the instigation of a depository for these specimens of rare or accidental species taken within the state. If such a collection were maintained, it would serve not alone as a place of security for these record specimens, but would encourage the study of distributional problems within the state. Undoubtedly, there would be a stimulation toward securing accidental or straggling species if the collectors knew that such specimens were desired and would be properly preserved. Certainly this factor is sufficient to justify the inauguration of such a centralized collection.

Below are listed a number of rare or accidental specimens contained in various collections. In most instances full details of the capture of each have been recorded in some ornithological journal, and all were recently enumerated in the "Revised List of the Birds of Iowa." Several specimens bear incomplete data or none at all. An effort should be made by the individuals in charge to complete these records. Eventually, we may hope that all of these specimens may be concentrated in one collection.

Pacific Loon.....	H. J. Giddings coll.....	labeled by writer
E. Brown Pelican.....	Boone Public Library.....	unlabeled
Ward's Heron.....	Dwight coll., N. Y.....	full data
" ".....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
Yellow-cr. Night Heron.....	U. S. National Museum.....	full data
White-faced Glossy Ibis.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
" " ".....	Tennant coll.....	unlabeled
" " ".....	Allert coll.....	full data
Trumpeter Swan.....	Odebolt High School.....	recently labeled
Lesser Canada Goose.....	U. S. Biological Survey, full data (two)	
Greater Scaup Duck.....	Coe College Museum.....	full data
W. Harlequin Duck.....	State Historical Museum.....	unlabeled
Pacific Eider.....	Sioux City Acad. Sci.....	unlabeled
King Eider.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
Black Vulture.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
Mississippi Kite.....	Iowa Wesleyan College, one of two labeled	
S. Bald Eagle.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
Prairie Falcon.....	Tennant coll.....	unlabeled (two)
" ".....	Bullock coll.....	unlabeled
Richardson's Pigeon Hawk.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
Prairie Sharp-tailed Grouse.....	Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.....	full data
" " ".....	Odebolt High School.....	full (?) data
Eastern Turkey.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
" " ".....	Jefferson Co. Library.....	unlabeled

Piping Plover.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
Eskimo Curlew.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	data confused
" ".....	Davenport Public Museum.....	full data
Western Sandpiper.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data (three)
" ".....	DuMont coll.....	full data
Buff-breasted Sandpiper.....	Univ. Iowa Museum, two of three with data	
Parasitic Jaeger.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
" ".....	Coe College Museum.....	full data
Long-tailed Jaeger.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
Atlantic Kittiwake.....	State Historical Mus.....	partial data
Sabine's Gull.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data (two)
" ".....	Davenport Public Mus.....	partial data
Brunnich's Murte.....	Stephens coll.....	full data
Arctic Horned Owl.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data (two)
" " ".....	Bolte's coll.....	existence unverified
Minnesota Barred Owl.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
Northern Horned Lark.....	Coe College Museum.....	full data (two)
" " ".....	Youngworth coll.....	full data
Clark's Nutcracker.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data (two)
" " ".....	Odebolt High School.....	full (?) data
Carolina Chickadee.....	Coe College Museum.....	full data
Russet-backed Thrush.....	Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.....	full data
N. Water-Thrush.....	Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.....	full data
Pine Grosbeak.....	Phila. Acad. Nat. Sci.....	partial data
White-winged Cross-bill.....	Allert coll.....	full data
" " ".....	Iowa State College.....	full data
Nevada Savannah Sparrow.....	Univ. Iowa Museum.....	full data
W. Field Sparrow.....	Coe College Museum.....	full data
" " ".....	Allert coll.....	full data
" " ".....	Youngworth coll.....	full data

—PHILIP A. DU MONT, Des Moines, Iowa.

January Birds in Northwest Iowa.—On a trip to Spirit Lake on January 1, 1935, we saw 12 Prairie Chickens, 1 Red-headed Woodpecker, 2 Meadowlarks, 25 Hungarian Partridges, 1 Northern Shrike, a flock of about 700 Crows, and several other species. On January 5, between Spencer and Algona, we saw 12 Short-eared Owls.—F. L. R. ROBERTS, Iowa City, Iowa.

"Brownie."—One very hot day last summer I found a baby Brown Thrasher in the direct sun in an alley behind our house. He was on his side, but when I picked him up he opened his eyes and beak. His parents were not to be seen. I took him into the house and he was soon comfortable in a warm nest of his own.

My next thought was to give him food and water, but how to give it to him was a question. A medicine dropper was put into service and did very well. I was surprised at the amount of water he drank. I soaked some bread in water, and he ate greedily. He let me know that he had enough by not opening his mouth. Soon he was asleep. We did not hear anything from him for about an hour. Suddenly we heard a chirp. I went to look at him and found him on the side of the basket. I made a trip to the alley and found the parent Brown Thrashers very much distressed. Returning with Brownie, I placed him in the shade near the two birds. One of them, evidently the mother bird, flew at me and picked the top of my head. She flew away and soon returned with a green worm which she put down Brownie's mouth. The thrasher family was united and happy again as I left them.—(MISS) DOROTHY JONES, Davenport, Iowa.

The Christmas Bird Census.—CEDAR FALLS, IOWA (Teachers College campus, through Cedar Falls, and east a half mile on highway No. 20, then south to Fisher's Lake and return), Dec. 26, 1934; 8:30 A. M. to 12:30 P. M. Strong north wind; temp. 13 degrees below zero. Observers together. Ring-necked Pheasant, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 2; Crow, 8; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Brown Creeper, 1; English Sparrow, 36; Goldfinch, 10; Slate-colored Junco, 1. Total, 10 species, 64 individuals.—JOHN BLIESE, JAMES HAWKS.

TAMA, IOWA (along highway No. 59 for a distance of 15 miles; food-shelf at home), Dec. 25, 1934. Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Broad-winged Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 2; Marsh Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Ring-necked Pheasant, 14; Short-eared Owl, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 3; Red-headed Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 3; Blue Jay, 6; Crow, 8; Black-capped Chickadee, 8; Tufted Titmouse, 9; White-breasted Nuthatch, 6; Brown Creeper, 1; Starling, 30; Meadowlark, 7; Cardinal, 2; Goldfinch, 2; Tree Sparrow, 8; Slate-colored Junco, 9. Total, 24 species, 127 individuals.—MR. AND MRS. W. G. MACMARTIN.

WEBSTER, IOWA (Porter School, south to North English River, downstream one mile and return), Dec. 26, 1934; 2 P. M. to 4:30 P. M. Temp. zero or below all day. Seven miles on foot. Bob-white, 16; Mourning Dove, 2; Barred Owl, 3; Flicker, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 5; Blue Jay, 1; Crow, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, 6; Tufted Titmouse, 6; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Starling, 26; Meadowlark, 1; Cardinal, 28; Slate-colored Junco, 2. Total, 16 species, 105 individuals.—MYRLE L. JONES.

("Eastern" and other directional names are omitted in the above lists. Their use in state bird journals is optional, we believe. Our editorial policy is to leave this matter in the hands of our contributors, who may use them or not, as they wish. The February issue of 'Bird-Lore' contained Iowa bird censuses from Backbone State Park, Davenport, Des Moines, Ogden and Pierson, with a combined total of 42 species.—Ed.)

Notes from Eastern Iowa, Winter of 1934-1935.—A small flight of Snow Buntings was to be found in Iowa this winter. A flock of about 300 was seen near Giard in Clayton County on January 12. Other small flocks of a few birds each were seen near Church, Allamakee County, on January 14. A lone Northern Shrike was noticed near Waterville, Allamakee County, on December 12, 1934. Deputy Game Warden George Kaufmann of Lansing saw a Snowy Owl on January 14, near New Albin, Allamakee County. An adult Bald Eagle was seen near this town by Mr. Kaufmann and the writer on January 15.

The following species are summer residents which in some years seem to remain in Iowa despite the zero weather. A Meadowlark was seen near McGregor, Clayton County, on December 9. Mourning Doves were seen in Jackson County near Maquoketa on December 7, and near Sabula on January 11. Two Bronzed Grackles were seen feeding in a farm yard near Ainsworth, Washington County, on January 17. A Song Sparrow was found near Burlington, Des Moines County, on December 17, and during the same month Sparrow Hawks were found on two occasions in Lee County, once in Muscatine County, once in Scott County, and twice in Keokuk County. During January, 1935, Sparrow Hawks were noticed in Keokuk County on the 10th, in Washington County on the 17th, and in Polk County on the 28th. Another was seen in Marion County on February 3.—WM. YOUNG WORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

Bald Eagles and American Mergansers.—On January 19, 1935, the writer observed six Bald Eagles and several hundred American Mergansers on the Mississippi River just opposite Davenport, Iowa. The deputy game wardens from that region report that it is common for the American Mergansers to winter on the Mississippi River from Davenport south.—LOGAN J. BENNETT, Des Moines, Iowa.

Lunch-counter Notes.—For years I have been feeding the winter birds. Black-capped Chickadees, Cardinals, Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, Tree Sparrows, Blue Jays, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers come to my feeding shelves. Last winter (1933-34) a Flicker was one of my winter bird guests. I put bread crumbs, sunflower, hemp and canary seeds on my lunch-counter, as well as a dish of water. Above the shelf hang suet boxes. Last winter a neighbor fed a male Robin all winter. This winter I had a Robin eating bread crumbs in my back yard as late as December 11. As I write this I see a male and female Cardinal eating sunflower seeds, and a Downy Woodpecker is picking at the suet.—(MISS) DOROTHY JONES, Davenport, Iowa.

Notes from Black Hawk County.—On July 28, 1934, I saw an American Egret on the Cedar River at Cedar Heights. It was feeding along the river in company with a Green Heron. Some boys in a boat disturbed the birds and both flew downstream several hundred yards, fed there for ten minutes, then returned almost opposite me. With the sun behind me, I had a splendid view of the bird for twenty minutes.

An injured Goshawk, which was found by Robert Porter near a road several miles southwest of Cedar Falls, was brought to Iowa State Teachers College on October 3, 1934. Having no control over its body other than the snapping of its beak and the grasping action of its talons (which it had sunk into Mr. Porter's hand nearly to the bone), it remained in whatever position it was placed. None of the hawk's bones was broken; nor had it been shot. It remained in that condition for a day, after which we decided to kill the bird and mount it. Illuminating gas was used to kill it. The dead bird was studied carefully, but nothing was found except a tiny blood clot about three-fourths of an inch from the base of the skull.

For several years I have suspected that the Western Meadowlark is decreasing and the Eastern Meadowlark increasing in this vicinity. About eight years ago the Western Meadowlark was the commoner form; now the Eastern bird appears to be more common. Wishing to study their relative abundance, I kept a record (by the difference in song) of the two forms as I found them on my various trips during 1934. On 14 trips, between May 26 and October 20, my record showed a total of 48 Eastern and 23 Western Meadowlarks. These numbers do not by any means represent all the Meadowlarks seen, but only those which were positively identified as either the Eastern or Western form. If this record can be taken as representative, the Eastern bird outnumbered the Western slightly more than two to one near Waterloo.

There appeared to be a dearth of Dickcissels in this vicinity during 1934. Although often visiting places where they should have been, not one specimen did I see throughout the entire season.

While at Steamboat Rock, Hardin County, on October 15, 1934, we found a Ruby-throated Hummingbird which had died clinging to its perch. With legs very straight it was hanging upside down on a choke-cherry twig. It was much shrunken and dried, but the entire bird seemed to be intact. We cut off the "death perch" to take the specimen home for a curiosity.—JOHN BLIESE, Waterloo, Iowa.



A BOB-WHITE COVEY FEEDING

Many farmers provide food for them in winter when such help is much needed.
(Courtesy of Iowa State College).

A Word for the Bob-white Quail.—Recently I met a man who pretended to be much concerned about the welfare of our Bob-white Quail. He said to me: "There is too much inbreeding going on among these birds. They lack vigor and stamina. Some shooting and scattering of the flocks would be a good thing. It would improve their health and vigor, and it would result in larger and more thrifty coveys in the future." I have heard others make similar statements.

Investigation shows, however, that in nearly every case the person making these assertions is possessed of a brace of dogs, high-top boots, and a repeating shotgun or two. These oracles of biological wisdom are too willing and ready to assist in this "scattering" process which they recommend. It is difficult to understand how two or three frightened birds, with a few feathers shot off and a stray shot or two in their bodies, can be of more value as breeding stock than a covey of 12 to 15 normal birds.

While it is my desire to give due consideration to the statements and claims of others, I believe that this important matter should be viewed from several angles. We have, for example, a number of species of swallows, swifts, blackbirds, finches, and others which gather annually, first in family groups and later in immense flocks. But they all have instinct or sense enough to separate in due time and take care of themselves and their progeny without man's "scattering" interventions. Furthermore, in the early history of Iowa, when human inhabitants were few and a shotgun almost a curiosity, quail were so numerous that they were occasionally taken in traps or nets by hundreds. But now it is sometimes claimed that the quail cannot take care of itself and may be become extinct unless aided by our nimrods with their dogs and repeaters!—E. D. NAUMAN, Sigourney, Iowa.

Birds of 1934 in the Iowa City Region.—During the year 1934 our family recorded 180 species of birds in the vicinity of Iowa City. We made 34 field trips in which the whole family participated. Individual members were out observing on several other occasions. The territory visited was largely within 20 miles of Iowa City and included Lilly Lake at Amana and the Conesville marshes. A few trips were made to various points along the Mississippi River.

Besides the more common birds our list included Herring, Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls, Forster's, Least and Black Terns, Double-crested Cormorant, American, Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers,

Black Duck, Gadwall, Snowy Egret, Blue Goose, Black-crowned Night Heron, King and Sora Rails, Wilson's Phalarope, Woodcock, Dowitcher, Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits, Black-bellied and Golden Plovers, Yellow-headed, Brewer's and Rusty Blackbirds, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Lapland Longspur, Lincoln's Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Cliff and Tree Swallows, Blue-winged, Cerulean and Connecticut Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, American Pipit, Mockingbird, Carolina and Bewick's Wrens, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Willow Thrush.—MARY PRICE ROBERTS, Grand Island, Nebraska.

Late Nesting of the Bob-white.—A one-day-old Bob-white chick was found in Washington County, Iowa, on September 27, 1934. The specimen was preserved and is now in permanent possession of the Zoology Department of Iowa State College at Ames.—LOGAN J. BENNETT, Des Moines, Iowa.

Little Blue Herons in Iowa.—On July 24, 1934, Gerald Spawn and the writer collected the first specimens taken in Iowa of the Little Blue Heron. Two birds were seen and collected on Elk Lake, Clay County. Both specimens are now in the permanent possession of the Zoology Department of Iowa State College at Ames.—LOGAN J. BENNETT, Des Moines, Iowa.

RECENT BIRD BOOKS

BIRD CITY, by E. A. McIlhenny (Christopher Publishing House, Boston, Mass., 1934; cloth, pp. 1-203; price, \$3).

Avery Island is in the southwestern part of Louisiana, near the Gulf of Mexico. In this region of abundant flora and fauna Mr. McIlhenny founded "Bird City," which, from a very modest beginning on a two-acre space in 1893, has grown into a 35-acre sanctuary in which 100,000 individuals of the heron family are now found. Although Bird City attracts many groups of birds, particularly the ducks, Mr. McIlhenny has endeavored to build up a colony of the Snowy Egret, a species which was all but annihilated by the plume trade in the nineties. He sowed the seeds of this colony with eight young birds which he secured from nests in the locality and reared in cages at his home. These birds were allowed to migrate, and most of them returned the next year. Then began the slow growth of the Snowy Egret colony, a growth covering many years and achieved through the great pains and solicitude of Mr. McIlhenny who was determined to replenish the ranks so sadly depleted by the plume hunter. In this he has been infinitely successful. The story of his work with the Snowy Egret, as told in this book, is absorbing reading.

For us Northerners 'Bird City' has a deep interest, as it is the story of birds of which we know but little. The wild life of the Louisiana swamp is amazingly abundant. The narrative is interwoven with descriptions of the habits of many of the wild creatures of this region. Not many of us will have opportunity to visit a birds' paradise such as this; but in reading the story we can at least partially visualize it. The book is filled with ornithological facts, which add greatly to our knowledge of several groups of unfamiliar birds. About 100 full-page halftone plates from photographs taken in Bird City admirably supplement the text.—F. J. P.

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AMERICAN BIRD BIOGRAPHIES, by Arthur A. Allen (Comstock Publishing Co., Ithaca, N. Y., 1934; cloth, pp. i-viii+1-238; price, \$3.50).

Dr. Allen's bird stories which have been appearing in 'Bird-Lore'

for several years are now available in book form. This volume presents the first series of these stories, while further volumes are promised. The present book takes up the life histories of twenty common birds. The chapters are in autobiographical form, each bird telling his own story of the endless struggle for existence—of his migration, nesting, family-rearing, food-hunting, eluding of enemies, and other intimate matters. They are appealing recitals, filled with heart interest and charm—a pleasing product of Dr. Allen's facile pen. Although written in a style to attract younger readers, the biographies are of interest to all ages and classes of bird students. Studied closely they will be found to contain a full description of the bird's life history, for which the author has drawn on his lifetime of experiences with birds, and has gleaned from the writings of our foremost ornithologists. The scientific accuracy of the text is therefore unquestioned. A series of 189 photographs of living birds attests Dr. Allen's skill as a wild life photographer. Twenty full-page plates, ten of which are in color, by George Miksch Sutton, further embellish the text. It is a handsome book, and one which assures a great store of entertaining and instructive reading.—F. J. P.

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Membership News.—On the night of January 6, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Rosene of Ogden were very seriously injured in an auto collision. This unfortunate occurrence necessitated a slow, painful recovery and many weeks spent in a hospital.

Mrs. Mary L. Bailey, our former Secretary, suffered very severe injuries in a fall some time ago. She was confined to her bed for a number of weeks.

Dr. F. L. R. Roberts has been elected a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha medical fraternity, "for exceptional ability in medical sciences."

George O. Faulkner of Waterloo left the United States early in the year on a trip of about three months during which he expected to visit various interesting places on the African continent. Last year his travels took him to South America, and he has traveled widely during other years.

Chas. J. Spiker spent the winter in Virginia as a naturalist in the National Park Service.

Dr. T. C. Stephens attended the Wilson Club meeting in Pittsburg, Pa., December 28-29. He was the only Iowan present at the meeting.

When last heard from, Walter W. Bennett was making a water-fowl survey of Arizona and New Mexico as a Junior Biologist of the United States Biological Survey. He received an appointment last fall and has been working in the Migratory Water-fowl Division of the Survey.

New Iowa members: John Bliese, Waterloo; J. W. Forster, Rock Rapids; Howard Graesing, Spirit Lake; Dr. E. S. Parker, Ida Grove; Gustav J. Schultz, Sutherland; Mrs. W. J. Armour, Sioux City; Mrs. Mell M. Clark, Corvdon; Mrs. J. T. Rogers, Corydon; Robt. H. Smith, Mason City; I. T. Bode, Des Moines.

New subscribers: Dr. Rudolph M. Anderson, Ottawa, Canada; Harry D. Dunbar, Elkhorn, Wis.; Mrs. A. R. Jenson, Clarks Grove, Minn.; Karl Maslowski, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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THE ANNUAL CONVENTION—SIOUX CITY, MAY 10-11-12

The foremost event in the year's activities—the annual convention—will be held this year at Sioux City on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, May 10, 11, and 12, with headquarters at the Martin Hotel. It is to be a joint meeting with the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union; therefore, it has unusual interest, offering opportunities to hear reports from workers

outside of our state and to meet many new bird students. The program committee, composed of Professors T. C. Stephens, Myron H. Swenk and Philip A. DuMont, have been working for many weeks on arrangements for the program, and with their capable handling, an unusually interesting program is assured. It is to be hoped that our membership will be well represented at this meeting. We feel sure that all who attend will find the program most enjoyable.

The meeting will be opened on Friday afternoon. It is planned to devote the afternoon and evening to a Conservation program, in charge of speakers who are eminent in this field. The Saturday morning and afternoon sessions will be in charge of the Iowa and Nebraska Ornithologists' Unions, and in addition to a series of splendid papers on various phases of bird work, the business meetings of the respective organizations will be held. On Saturday evening there will be an ornithological dinner, with Dr. Thomas S. Roberts, of the University of Minnesota, as the guest of honor and speaker. Dr. Roberts, who is author of the monumental work on 'The Birds of Minnesota,' is regarded as the Dean of Mississippi Valley ornithologists. On Sunday it is planned to have a field trip through the proposed Lewis and Clark National Park, which embraces 30,000 acres lying along the Missouri River on the Nebraska side. Lunch will be eaten in the woods.

Plans are going forward steadily, but as we go to press it is too early to give a detailed account of what the preparations include. Mimeographed announcements of the completed program will be mailed to each member well in advance of the meeting. Much credit is due those upon whom fall the heavy responsibilities of giving us a good program and an enjoyable convention. Sioux City invites you, and the officers and committees of the Iowa and Nebraska Ornithologists' Unions urge you to attend. Mark the dates on your calendar!—F. J. P.

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